

# Responding to Theft

- Displaying a firm and confident manner in confronting a potential thief may prevent an offence from being committed
- Do not put up resistance if your handbag is seized as you could be assaulted or seriously injured during the struggle
- If your handbag is stolen, activate an alarm if you have one and yell out 'stop thief' or similar
- Remember as many details about the incident as possible
- Telephone the police immediately on **000** providing a description of the thief, direction of travel and details of any vehicle used, including licence plate number
- Notify your bank or credit card provider as soon as possible if your Eftpos or credit cards have been stolen. Never keep a written record of your PIN numbers with your cards
- You could receive a phone call from a person **claiming** to be from the bank, credit card provider or police, requesting your PIN number for cancellation or other action to be taken. These agencies do not call victims requesting PIN numbers so **do not** divulge any information.



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VICTORIA POLICE

*Together  
Creating Safer Communities*

KEEP IT **LIGHT**  
HELD **TIGHT**  
AND  
OUT OF **SIGHT**

### Disclaimer

This brochure contains general guidelines for handbag security. The providers of this information make no representation nor give any guarantee concerning your safety.

For additional personal safety advice call:  
Your nearest police station and ask for the Crime Prevention Officer.



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VICTORIA POLICE

# Handbag Security



Victoria Police – Crime Prevention

# Handbag Security

**Everyone has the right to feel safe. This brochure provides some practical advice on how to feel safe and confident when out in the community whilst reducing the risk of having your belongings stolen.**

## Out and About

- Be assertive, walk with confidence and be aware of your surroundings
- **Secure your handbag close to your body, carrying it so that it faces away from passing traffic**
- If you wrap a handbag strap around your arm or place it around your neck or over your shoulder, an injury can occur when a handbag is forcibly snatched
- Keep to major, well-lit streets and avoid isolated areas
- If someone is following you, avoid taking shortcuts and find a location with other people in the vicinity such as shopping areas
- Be observant and aware of people who appear suspicious and who try to distract you. Change your route or call for assistance if necessary
- Consider wearing a waist bag or travel wallet under your clothing



## Using a Vehicle

- If possible, secure property in the boot before arriving at your destination
- When travelling, drive with the doors locked and passenger windows wound up
- Avoid leaving items of value inside your vehicle particularly in full view of passers-by
- Park your vehicle in well lit areas
- Have your keys in your hand upon reaching your vehicle so that you are not distracted while looking for them
- **When placing bags in the boot or vehicle secure your handbag and children first before attending to your shopping**
- Be observant and aware of people who may appear suspicious. Report unusual activity



## ATM Machines

- When using an ATM, shield your PIN number and be alert to anyone watching you. Place your money in your purse/wallet immediately after the transaction and close the bag
- If you feel uncomfortable or unsafe at any time when using the ATM, cancel the transaction and leave
- Be particularly alert after using the ATM to any person who may follow you. If you think someone is following you, go immediately to a safe location where there are people and telephone the police
- Do not carry large amounts of cash with you. Withdraw only money needed at the time
- Seek out ATMs located inside buildings, supermarkets or other busy locations

## Shopping Trolleys

- The best place for your handbag is on you, zipped up with no valuable items exposed
- Do not leave your handbag unattended on top of a shopping trolley
- **Be mindful of distractions, thieves (working in pairs) may attempt to divert your attention in order to steal your handbag or its contents**



## In Public Places

- If you must, leave your handbag with someone you trust particularly at crowded venues
- If using restrooms, do not place your handbag close to the door or side - walls particularly if there is a gap between the walls and the ground. It could be snatched from the outside
- In restaurants, put your bag on your lap or on the floor between your feet with your foot on the strap. Alternatively place the strap through one leg of the chair
- Never leave your bag on adjacent seats in theatres, halls or on public transport
- Hold onto your purse or wallet tightly keeping it close to you
- Inattention when you place a handbag down and deal with purchases or other matters could result in handbag theft